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Consideration of important elements in student teaching experience and ways of administering student teaching program. Discusses qualification requirements for supervising teachers and college supervisors, and the advantages and disadvantages of full-time student teaching.

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Seminar 3

Student Teaching

Introduction

Student teaching is perhaps the most important phase of teacher education. The Seminar on Student Teaching believes that the experiences which the student teacher gets in this area will affect his future effectiveness as a classroom teacher. In discussing ways to cope with the importance of developing an effective student teaching program the Seminar decided to consider two phases of student teacher programs in order to reach some kind of decisions about what the significant contributions of student teaching are. These two phases were chosen for discussion:

1. Elements which are important in the student teaching experience.
2. Ways of administering the student teaching program.

In approaching the first part of this study it seemed to be imperative that this Seminar name or list a number of things, items or characteristics which are necessary for the student teacher to synthesize from his student teaching experience. The items which were accepted are:

The student teaching experience should foster the following personal qualities:

1. A desire to support children in their efforts toward self-realization.
2. A willingness to accept wide individual differences in people.
3. A sense of professional responsibility.
4. A sense of personal adequacy.
5. A desire and an ability to do more critical and creative thinking.

The student teaching experience should also develop the following competencies:

1. Competence in matters of classroom management.
2. Resourcefulness in developing classroom activities.
3. Ability to help students deal with problems which have value content.
4. Ability to help students to use subject matter in the solution of problems.
5. Competence in understanding the total functioning of the school.
6. Ability to benefit from continuing self-evaluation.
7. Competence in testing hypotheses related to teaching in daily experience.

The Seminar realizes that this list is not exhaustive and that there are in existence several such lists which are familar in their approaches but more comprehensive. One of the lists referred to by all members was the "California Statement of Teacher Competence."

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Ways of Administering Student Teaching Programs and the Problems Involved

The student teaching program in most schools is by far the most expensive phase of teacher education. Several student teaching administrative patterns were described and discussed by the Seminar. It seems that all of these different patterns develop a varying number of difficulties which need constant scrutiny. Some of the different problems indicated in the discussions were:

1. Many college organizational patterns tend to scatter college supervisors. When supervisors cover a large range of subject matter courses, it becomes difficult for one person to handle the program adequately. Overloading of certain people occurs frequently in some schools. Occasionally, there is no clear definition of administrative authority.

2. Many block programs have too much crammed into a limited time with insufficient time allotted to methods courses.

3. One of the most difficult problems in student teaching is the selection of supervising teachers. These problems were listed as:

    a. Some of these people resent the visitations from critique teachers.

    b. It is difficult to find supervising teachers who are good, experienced teachers.

    c. Isolation from the life of the campus presents various problems.

4. Another problem in student teaching involves the utilization of as many faculty members as possible for college supervisors. This problem seems to revolve around the following factors:

    a. There is no pay for assuming responsibility for visiting and counseling student teachers.

    b. Ignorance of many faculty members concerning the purposes and processes of the teacher-training program.

    c. Faculty loads cause faculty members to stay away from extra duties.

5. In larger institutions where the block system cannot be used the problem of cooperation with other subject matter areas is difficult. Students cannot be sent out for a whole day at a time. This causes a kind of disconnected experience.

6. Problem of motivating supervising teachers:

   a. Some schools are managing to bring all supervising teachers into special events such as banquets, seminars, etc.

   b. It has been suggested that free tickets to school events would make them feel that they were a part of the college.

   c. We could possibly turn to state organizations for help to establish a system of certification for supervising teachers. This program would have the state reimburse the teacher rather than the college. State supervision of supervising teachers might eliminate competition between schools for competent teachers.

7. Student teaching programs have out-grown laboratory schools so that there are too many people in the same room at the same time.

8. Another thorny problem in student teaching and pre-student teaching experiences is the assignment of grades and evaluations.

Key Personnel
in the Student Teaching Program

The Seminar recognizes that a good student teaching program is based primarily upon certain key people and the organizational pattern, while important, cannot function adequately without top people to administer the program. These key people are:

1. The student teacher

2. The supervising teacher

3. The college supervisor

The Supervising Teacher

A. Method of Selection

The Seminar recognized the fact that the supervising teacher is one of the key persons on whom the success of any student teaching program depends.

Today more public schools are serving as laboratories for student teaching and the direction of students in these schools rests largely upon the supervising teacher. Even though the supervising teacher is given some assistance by personnel from the college, it is the close guidance given by the supervising teacher that determines the student's growth toward competence in teaching.

There can be no doubt that teachers who accept responsibility must be skilled in techniques and procedures of teaching as well as in guidance. The supervising teachers must exemplify the qualities which they encourage in student teaching. They must continue their improvement in order to keep abreast of changing educational values.

Realizing the importance of a working relationship between the college, the public school and the supervising teacher, the following guides are suggested for making more effective this working relationship with emphasis on methods of selecting supervising teachers:

1. An attempt should be made to provide more recognition and coordination between the college and the supervising teacher.

2. In order to save time and energy, emphasis should be placed on the careful selection of supervising teachers at the outset rather than on the improvement of supervising teachers after their selection.

3. An attempt should be made to find student teaching situations for matching characteristics of the student teacher and the supervising teacher. If possible the student should be involved in the selection of his student teaching position.

4. A corps of supervising teachers should be built with those persons who are sympathetic to the college student teaching program.

5. A criteria might be established for selecting good school systems for placing student teachers based upon the following considerations:

   (a) Attitude of administrative personnel
   (b) Quality of instruction
   (c) Facilities at the school
   (d) Distance from the college

B. Methods of Rewarding and Compensating Supervising Teachers

Constant attention should be given to ways and methods of recognizing the important position held by supervising teachers. Provisions should be made for in-service growth of these teachers. Means of reward and compensation for the services rendered by the supervising teacher should be commensurate with the importance of the service rendered. There is no consistent pattern for this reimbursement.

Specific ways that the college can help to add professional status to the position of supervising teachers are:

1. To offer workshops and classes for supervising teachers.

2. To work toward state certification of supervising teachers with compensation at the state level.

3. To provide social and professional functions to which supervising teachers are invited.

4. To request that State Teachers Association allows time at its annual meetings for sessions and social functions devoted primarily to supervising teachers and administrative personnel.

5. To develop means of direct communication with the supervising teachers through newsletters, bulletins and other materials.

College Supervisor

A college supervisor, when he assumes the responsibilities of being a teacher of teachers, and serving as a liasion resource person, needs to have distinctive qualities for his obligations. The Seminar suggests that it would be well for him to be a person:

1. Who has college rank and teaches (with enthusiasm and scholarship) some classes on the college campus sometime during the year.

2. Who has had (satisfactory) public school experience, and also had student teaching in his own college program.

3. Who is challenged by the role of a supervisor, who has a deepening philosophy of education and concern for helping a student to assume his role as a teacher in an era of fast pace.

4. Who is cognizant of the principles and content of the current courses in professional education that the student takes before and after his teaching experience; i. e., who is the liaison resource person to help students to see the interplay and integration of different schools of thought in the professional education pattern in both on and off campus experiences (whether he has one student or twenty).

5. Who is a liaison resource person for college personnel, public school personnel, community, state, and student teacher.

6. Who can sit down and visit with a supervising teacher as a peer and learn what their respective philosophies of learning and teaching are, as well as to have an exchange of ideas in the subject-matter field. (Most college supervisors can read and study a bit of the basic ideas and new developments in any field.); i. e., who will be permissive for the development of some ego satisfaction for both himself and the supervising teacher, so they will both be ready to help the student teacher to develop a professional self.

7. Who can visit with a student teacher to help him develop peer status and the enthusiasm and will to work as well as he knows and can learn to do.

8. Who clarifies with the Teacher Education Staff and others questions of policy about:

   a. Evaluation
      The grade for the transcript - given by whom
      The recommendation that automatically goes to the Placement Bureau - written by whom
   b. Materials policy
      What about movies from the College Library - free or charged when used in public schools by student teacher
      What about use of tapes
      What about books, records
   c. Number of visits from the college supervisor
      Nature and extent of help the student can expect
   d. Recognition and renumeration of the supervising teacher
   e. Subject matter head of department's relationship to student teaching experience
   f. Campus supervising teachers relationship to a student teaching in public schools

Advantages of Full-time Student Teaching

The advantages of full-time student teaching are:

1. The student observes and participates in a regular school program for a whole day (this is similar to full-time employment).

2. The student has greater opportunity to consult with the supervising teacher.

3. The student has more opportunities for contact with parents, other teachers, and other school personnel.

4. The student is not involved in spending a large proportion of his time in travel.

5. Administration of the student teaching program is simplified.

6. The student's full energies are devoted to student teaching activities.

The disadvantges of full-time student teaching are:

1. There is greater misfortune if the student and the supervising teacher do not get along.

2. Frequently this method does not permit experience on more than one level and excludes experience in a different school.

3. Precludes taking methods and other courses concurrently and often does not permit as much sharing of ideas among students.

4. Student teaching spaced over a greater period of time allows more time for maturity and reflective thinking.

The Seminar feels that the advantages of full-time student teaching become the disadvantages in a part-time program and the disadvantages in a full-time program become advantages in a part-time program.

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